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ABSTRACT

The material in this Technical Assistance Packet is intended to help mentoring programs monitor individual matches and develop a larger picture that provides a composite view of the strengths and shortcomings of all their matches. The packet contains the "Youth Survey," a tool to monitor the quality of individual mentoring relationships, determine what the program is achieving, gain insight into effective and ineffective elements of a program, and establish benchmarks to measure changes in the quality of the program's mentor-youth relationships. The section of this packet is a guide to scoring the survey, with directions for calculating scores for individual surveys and finding averages and ranges for scores across all the surveys. A concluding section focuses on suggestions about ways programs can use their survey findings to strengthen practices. Also included are copies of the scoring sheets that can be reproduced. (SLD)

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NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships

a tool for mentoring programs

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PACKET #8

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PACKET #8

Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships:

a tool for mentoring programs

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INTRODUCTION

Evaluations of mentoring programs have shown that a youth's one-to-one relationship with a supportive adult can lead to a number of positive outcomes. These include improved academic achievement, a stronger sense of self-worth, improved relationships with parents, and decreased drug and alcohol use. These benefits of mentoring emerge for youth who are in relationships that have been able to develop and endure. Mentors promote positive outcomes when they serve as role models; provide emotional support and positive feedback; and become a steady, reliable, constructive presence in the lives of youth.

Mentoring relationships that take hold are likely to grow progressively more effective over time. But while some mentor-youth relationships last for several years, many end within a few months. These short-lived matches are unlikely to result in positive outcomes for youth. And, there is some evidence that they can have negative effects associated with the youth's feelings of being rejected (Grossman & Rhodes, in press; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995; Morrow & Styles, 1995).

Why do so many relationships fail? In some cases, the reasons are outside a program's or mentor's control—for example, the youth might move to a different community. But in many cases, failed matches are a result of weak program infrastructure—programs might not provide adequate screening, thoughtful matching, and necessary training. And often, programs fail to adequately monitor matches, especially in the crucial, early "getting to know you" phase. New matches often encounter miscommunication and other problems that, if identified, could likely be addressed and resolved so the relationship could continue and strengthen.

THE YOUTH SURVEY: A USEFUL TOOL

All programs struggle to a greater or lesser extent with mentor-youth matches that fail to develop into the kinds of supportive relationships that can lead to positive outcomes. And even programs that carefully monitor individual matches rarely have the opportunity or resources to step back and look at the patterns across all of their matches in order to assess overall strengths and weaknesses, identify the sources of recurring problems, and make necessary changes in program practices.

The material in this Technical Assistance Packet is intended to help programs both monitor individual matches and develop a larger picture that provides a composite view of the strengths and shortcomings of all their matches. The following pages should prepare program operators and staff to administer a survey to youth in their programs, score the survey and perform basic analyses of the scores, and understand how to use their findings to improve program practices.

This Packet includes:

THE "YOUTH SURVEY"
This section provides an introduction to the survey and its potential applications. It also includes a clean copy of the survey, which programs can reproduce for their own use.

A GUIDE TO SCORING THE SURVEY
The guide includes two sections: calculating scores for individual surveys, and finding averages and ranges for scores across all the surveys.

A CONCLUSION
This section focuses on suggestions about ways that programs can use their survey findings to strengthen practices.

CLEAN COPIES OF THE SCORING SHEETS
Programs can reproduce the sheets for their own use.

The material ends with a list of references and additional resources.[1]

[1] The survey and scoring information included here are based on evaluation tools and findings from Public/Private Ventures' (P/PV's) evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). The P/PV research examined the effect of BBBS on youth ages 10 to 14 who enrolled in the program at eight study sites between October 1991 and February 1993. In addition, some of the material in this packet is adapted from Grossman & Johnson, 1999.

THE YOUTH SURVEY:

MEASURING THE QUALITY OF MENTOR-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

This section includes:

- A brief discussion about potential uses of the survey
- An overview of the qualities the survey measures
- Tips for administering the survey
- A clean copy of the survey (two pages) that you can reproduce

The guide in the following two sections will lead you through the process of scoring the survey.

WHY MEASURE THE STRENGTH OF MENTOR-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS?

Questions from the "Youth Survey" were originally used in an evaluation of 10- to 14-year-olds who were matched with mentors through Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) agencies. The evaluation found that outcomes for youth in "good" relationships were positive and consistent.[2] The "Youth Survey" can help programs foster these strong relationships. It is a tool that allows you to:

- Monitor the quality of individual mentor-youth relationships
- Determine what your program is achieving now, overall, in its efforts to nurture strong relationships
- Gain insight into which of your program elements (such as mentor screening or training) are currently effective and which need to be modified and strengthened
- Establish benchmarks so you can measure changes in the quality of your program's mentor-youth relationships over time as you modify program practices

[2] In particular, youth in strong mentoring relationships were more likely than similar, non-mentored youth to feel self-confident about doing their schoolwork, less likely to skip school, less likely to start using drugs, less likely to start using alcohol, and had higher grades. See Tierney, Grossman & Resch for a discussion of the findings.

In addition, because questions on the survey were originally used in the evaluation of BBBS, the survey results from those agencies are available and are included in relevant sections of the scoring guide later in this material. You can compare your findings about the quality of the mentoring relationships in your program to findings about the quality of the relationships in BBBS agencies, programs that have been shown to have significant, positive outcomes for youth.

WHAT QUALITIES DOES THE SURVEY MEASURE?

The "Youth Survey" includes 19 questions that measure three different, but related, qualities of mentor-youth relationships. The items that measure each of these qualities are deliberately mixed together on the survey. This is because you can get a better understanding of how a youth is really feeling when she or he must go anew to a similar question and again consider the response.

The three qualities are:

1. ***The extent to which the relationship is centered on the youth.*** The BBBS research demonstrated that youth who feel their mentor takes their preferences and interests into account are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel their mentor is less interested in them.

This quality is measured through questions 2, 5, 8, 11, 15.

2. ***The youth's emotional engagement.*** These items measure the degree to which the youth enjoys the relationship and is emotionally engaged in it (for example, whether the youth feels happy, special, mad, or bored). Youth who feel better about being around their mentor are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel less positive.

This quality is measured through questions 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19.

3. ***The extent to which the youth is dissatisfied with the relationship.*** Youth who feel more dissatisfied with their mentor and the relationship are less likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth with more favorable impressions. Thus, mentoring programs that can create more satisfying relationships are more likely to be effective than are similar mentoring programs that create less satisfying relationships.

This quality is measured through questions 1, 4, 7, 10, 14, 17.

TIPS FOR GIVING THE SURVEY

1. If possible, it is preferable to administer the survey to groups of youth rather than individually. When youth complete the survey as part of a group, they are likely to feel more anonymous and, thus, be more honest in their responses. (However, if you are using the survey as a tool for monitoring individual relationships, you will need to ask youth to write their name on the survey, so the anonymity will be lost.)

2. If you do administer the survey in a one-to-one setting, think about which staff member or volunteer connected with your program would be the best choice to give the survey. Are there staff members whom youth might particularly want to please? If so, they are probably not the best choice for administering the survey because it could affect the honesty of the youth's responses.

3. You can follow this process to administer the survey to a group of youth:

   - Give each youth a pencil and a copy of the survey.
   - Have a staff member or volunteer lead them through the process of completing the personal information at the top of the survey by reading the items aloud.
   - Then have the staff member/volunteer read the instructions aloud and have youth complete the sample question for practice.
   - The staff member or volunteer should then read each question aloud. After each question is read, youth circle their responses.

While they are taking the survey, some youth might ask why you are asking about the same thing several times in different ways. You could answer by saying something like: "This is so we can really understand what you think or feel. Like in basketball, if you want to know how well someone shoots, you ask them to shoot several times, not just once."

(A clean copy of the Youth Survey appears on the following two pages.)

YOUTH SURVEY

(For Ages 9 and above)

What is today's date? Month _____ Day_____ Year _____

1. Are you a girl or a boy? ☐ 1 Boy ☐ 2 Girl

2. How old are you? _____

3. What is your birth date? Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

4. What grade are you in at school? _____

5. Put an **X** in the box next to all that you use to describe yourself, your race, or ethnicity. Are you....

☐ 1 Black or African American

☐ 2 White, not Hispanic

☐ 3 Hispanic or Latino/a

☐ 4 Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ 5 American Indian or Alaskan Native

☐ 6 Other _____

On the next page are some things kids say about their mentors. Please circle one number for each statement to say how true it is for you and how you feel. For each sentence, circle if the statement is not true at all, if it's not very true, if it's sort of true, or if it's very true of you.

For example, if your mentor always remembers your name, you would circle **"4"** (Very True) to question 0. Don't worry that the numbers in a column differ among the questions. Now start with Question 1.

(continued on next page)

		Not True At All	*Not Very True*	*Sort of True*	*Very True*
0.	My mentor knows my name.	1	2	3	4
1.	My mentor makes fun of me in ways I don't like.	1	2	3	4
2.	My mentor almost always asks me what I want to do.	1	2	3	4
3.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel special.	1	2	3	4
4.	Sometimes my mentor promises we will do something; then we don't do it.	1	2	3	4
5.	My mentor is always interested in what I want to do.	1	2	3	4
6.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel excited.	1	2	3	4
7.	When my mentor gives me advice, it makes me feel stupid.	1	2	3	4
8.	My mentor and I like to do a lot of the same things.	1	2	3	4
9.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel sad.	4	3	2	1
10.	I feel I can't trust my mentor with secrets—my mentor would tell my parent/guardian.	1	2	3	4
11.	My mentor thinks of fun and interesting things to do.	1	2	3	4
12.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel important.	1	2	3	4
13.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel bored.	4	3	2	1
14.	I wish my mentor asked me more about what I think.	1	2	3	4
15.	My mentor and I do things I really want to do.	1	2	3	4
16.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel mad.	4	3	2	1
17.	I wish my mentor knew me better.	1	2	3	4
18.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel disappointed.	4	3	2	1
19.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel happy.	1	2	3	4

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SCORING GUIDE 1

USING THE SURVEY AS A TOOL FOR MONITORING RELATIONSHIPS: CALCULATING THE SCORE OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

This section includes:

- An overview of how to use the survey to monitor the strength of individual mentor-youth relationships.
- A sample completed survey.
- Sample completed scoring sheets—one for each quality the survey measures—that guide you through the process of scoring the survey. To help you understand what your findings mean, each sheet includes a description of the categories of scores for that particular quality.

HOW CAN THE SURVEY HELP TO STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL MENTOR-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS?

The "Youth Survey" allows you to gain an understanding of the strengths and potential problems of each mentor-youth relationship in your program. You can use it to:

- Monitor the progress of each relationship over time.
- Identify relationships that are not developing. You can then intervene by, for example, working with the mentor and/or youth to resolve problems or providing additional mentor training.

Because the survey is measuring three different qualities of a mentoring relationship, the score for each quality can help give clearer insight into the nature of potential problems in the relationship. For example, if a survey has a particularly low score for "youth-centered relationship," it would indicate that the youth feels that he or she has very little "voice" in the relationship. You could then arrange training for the mentor specifically focused on this issue.

The survey might also pick up problems with relationships that seem fine on the surface. The mentor and youth may be meeting regularly and report no problems, but the survey can detect if a bond is not forming between them.

WHEN SHOULD THE SURVEY BE GIVEN?

Each program can decide when and how often to use the survey. You could, for example, have youth complete the survey three months after they begin meeting with their mentor, and take the survey again at six months, nine months, and a year. Or, you could give the survey at four months, seven months, and 11 months into the relationship.

It is not possible to say exactly how scores on the survey should change over time for any particular relationship. As you use this tool, you will discover patterns for a "normal" progression of scores for the relationships in your program.

Research on the formation of mentor-youth relationships suggests, however, that most mentor-youth pairs might not feel particularly close after only three months of meetings, but greater numbers would feel closer by six months (Grossman & Rhodes, in press). Thus, the most important comparison would be with the score the time before. If at six months, the survey shows that the match is still at the same degree of "low closeness" as it was when the survey was given at three months, that is a good indication that program managers should intervene with strategies that can lead to a stronger relationship with the potential for more positive outcomes.

HOW ARE THE SCORES CALCULATED?

When you score the survey, you will calculate a separate score for each of the three qualities: youth-centered relationship, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction. Thus, you will have three different scores for each survey. Remember that the items that measure each of these qualities are deliberately mixed together on the survey.

See the next page for a sample completed survey. This is followed by three pages that guide you through the process of calculating the score on that survey for each of the three qualities. Clean copies of scoring sheets are included at the end of this packet. Feel free to reproduce them for your program's use.

SAMPLE COMPLETED SURVEY AND SCORES

YC = Youth-Centered Relationship
EE = Youth's Emotional Engagement
YD = Youth's Dissatisfaction

			Not True At All	*Not Very True*	*Sort of True*	*Very True*
YD	1.	My mentor makes fun of me in ways I don't like.	(1)	2	3	4
YC	2.	My mentor almost always asks me what I want to do.	1	2	(3)	4
EE	3.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel special.	1	2	3	(4)
YD	4.	Sometimes my mentor promises we will do something; then we don't do it.	1	(2)	3	4
YC	5.	My mentor is always interested in what I want to do.	1	2	(3)	4
EE	6.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel excited.	1	(2)	3	4
YD	7.	When my mentor gives me advice, it makes me feel stupid.	1	(2)	3	4
YC	8.	My mentor and I like to do a lot of the same things.	1	(2)	3	4
EE	9.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel sad.	(4)	3	2	1
YD	10.	I feel I can't trust my mentor with secrets – my mentor would tell my parent/guardian.	(1)	2	3	4
YC	11.	My mentor thinks of fun and interesting things to do.	1	(2)	3	4
EE	12.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel important.	1	2	(3)	4
EE	13.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel bored.	4	3	(2)	1
YD	14.	I wish my mentor asked me more about what I think.	1	2	(3)	4
YC	15.	My mentor and I do things I really want to do.	1	(2)	3	4
EE	16.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel mad.	(4)	3	2	1
YD	17.	I wish my mentor knew me better.	1	2	(3)	4
EE	18.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel disappointed.	4	(3)	2	1
EE	19.	When I'm with my mentor, I feel happy.	1	2	(3)	4

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SAMPLE:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 1 of 3)

I. Youth-centered relationship (YC)

Youth who feel their mentor takes their preferences and interests into account are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel their mentor is less interested in them. This quality is measured through questions 2, 5, 8, 11, 15.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

YC QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
2	3
5	3
8	2
11	2
15	2

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 5 to 20.)

   Total = 12

3. Divide the total by 5 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score = 2.4 (12 divided by 5)

What the score means:

For youth-centered relationship, the categories range from:
4.0 (very youth-centered)
3.0 to 3.99
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)

The score for the relationship in the example was 2.4 – at the low end of the scale.

SAMPLE:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 2 of 3)

II. Youth's emotional engagement (EE)

These items measure the degree to which the youth enjoys the relationship and is emotionally engaged in it (for example, whether the youth feels happy, special, mad, or bored). Youth who feel better about being around their mentor are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel less positive. This quality is measured through questions 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

EE QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
3	4
6	2
9	4
12	3
13	2
16	4
18	3
19	3

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 8 to 32.)

   Total = **25**

3. Divide the total by 8 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score = **3.125** (25 divided by 8)

What the score means:

For youth's emotional engagement, the categories range from:
4.0 (highly engaged)
3.0 to 3.9
1.0 to 2.9 (not very engaged)

The score for the relationship in the example was 3.125 – in the lower part of the mid-range of the scale.

SAMPLE:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 3 of 3)

III. Youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

Youth who feel more dissatisfied with their mentor and the relationship are less likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth with more favorable impressions. Thus, mentoring programs that can create more satisfying relationships are more likely to be effective than are similar mentoring programs that create less satisfying relationships. This quality is measured through questions 1, 4, 7, 10, 14, 17.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

YC QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
1	1
4	2
7	2
10	1
14	3
17	3

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 6 to 24.)

   Total = 12

3. Divide the total by 6 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score = 2 (12 divided by 6)

What the score means:

For youth's dissatisfaction, the categories range from:
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)
1.5 to 2.49
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)
Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

The score for the relationship in the example was 2 – in the middle of the scale.

SCORING GUIDE 2

USING THE SURVEY TO GAUGE OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: FINDING AVERAGES AND RANGES

This section includes:

- An overview of how to use the survey to measure overall program effectiveness
- Sample completed scoring sheets—one for each quality the survey measures—that guide you through the process of calculating the average score for all youth completing the survey
- Sample completed scoring sheets—one for each quality the survey measures—that guide you through the process of organizing the range of scores for all youth completing the survey

HOW CAN THE SURVEY HELP TO STRENGTHEN OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS?

Once you have scored the individual surveys, it is relatively quick and simple to calculate the averages of all the scores or to organize the scores into ranges. Thus, the "Youth Survey" allows you to:

- See the "big picture"—the quality of the mentor-youth relationships across all of the participants in your program.
- Determine what your program is achieving now. You can then use your findings to help identify what program practices should be strengthened, and to establish benchmarks that you can use to gauge program progress over time.

The scoring sheets also provide information that allows you to compare your findings about the quality of the mentoring relationships in your program to findings about the quality of the relationships in Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, programs that have been shown to have significant, positive outcomes for youth. It is important to note that the average length of relationship for BBBS youth when they completed the survey was 12.8 months. Thus, the relationships were well-developed.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOOKING AT AVERAGES AND AT RANGES?

Both averages and ranges will give you an overall picture of the quality of the mentor-youth relationships in your program. However, the pictures they give are taken through different lenses.

The average, sometimes also called the "mean," is a single number that summarizes or represents the general meaning of all the scores. You calculate it by adding all the scores and then dividing the total by the number of scores you added.

The average is a good shorthand way of seeing how strong your program's mentoring relationships are in each of the three qualities that the survey measures. However, the average can also be somewhat misleading. Particularly if you have a small program and are, thus, calculating the average scores for a relatively small number of surveys, just a few particularly strong or particularly weak relationships could skew your numbers so that your program looks either more or less effective than it actually is.

The range, on the other hand, consists of several numbers that show differences among all the relationships—what percentage are in the strongest category, in the middle category, and in the weakest category of each quality that the survey measures. Ranges are thus a kind of group picture that illustrates all the individual relationships in your program.

Each program will want to decide whether it is more useful to find averages or ranges or both. The "Conclusion" of this Technical Assistance Packet provides suggestions on how to use those findings to strengthen programs.

HOW ARE AVERAGES AND RANGES CALCULATED?

The following pages include three sample, completed scoring sheets that lead you through the process of calculating the average of all survey scores in each of the three qualities: youth-centered relationships, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction. They are followed by three sample sheets that similarly lead you through the process of organizing survey scores into ranges. Clean copies of sheets for calculating averages and finding ranges are included at the end of this packet. Feel free to reproduce them for your program's use.

SAMPLE:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 1 of 3)

Find the average scores for the mentor-youth relationships in your program. For each of the three qualities that is being measured – youth-centered relationships, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction – total the scores for that quality. Then divide the total by the number of scores you have added together.

Example: You administer the "Youth Survey" to 20 youth who are in mentoring relationships through your program. You then score each of the 20 surveys.

Average score for youth-centered relationship (YC)

1. Total the "youth-centered relationship" scores from all of the surveys.

YC SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 2.4	6) 3.2	11) 3.8	16) 3.2	21)
2) 4	7) 3	12) 3.4	17) 2.8	22)
3) 3	8) 3.6	13) 3.4	18) 1.6	23)
4) 4	9) 3.4	14) 4	19) 2	24)
5) 3.8	10) 3	15) 2.6	20) 2.8	25)

Total = 63

2. Divide the total by the number of scores. 63 divided by 20 = 3.15.
   The average rating for youth-centered relationship is 3.15.

What the score means:

For youth-centered relationship, the categories range from:
4.0 (very youth-centered)
3.0 to 3.99
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)

The average score was 3.15 – in the lower part of the middle of the scale.

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth-centered relationship in those programs was 3.69.

SAMPLE:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 2 of 3)

Average score for youth's emotional engagement (EE)

1. Total the "youth's emotional engagement" scores from all the surveys.

EE SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 3.125	6) 3	11) 4	16) 3.25	21)
2) 3.5	7) 2.75	12) 3.375	17) 2.25	22)
3) 2.625	8) 3.5	13) 3.125	18) 1.125	23)
4) 3.875	9) 3.25	14) 3.5	19) 1.75	24)
5) 4	10) 2.5	15) 1.75	20) 3	25)

Total = 59.25

2. Divide the total by the number of scores. 59.25 divided by 20 = 2.96.
   The average rating for the youth's emotional engagement is 2.96.

What the score means:

For youth's emotional engagement, the categories range from:
4.0 (highly engaged)
3.0 to 3.9
1.0 to 2.9 (not very engaged)

The average score was 2.96 – in the upper part of the bottom of the scale.

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth's emotional engagement was 3.55.

SAMPLE:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 3 of 3)

Average score for youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

1. Total the "youth's dissatisfaction" scores from all the surveys.

YD SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 2	6) 2.33	11) 1.33	16) 2.5	21)
2) 1.5	7) 3.17	12) 1.83	17) 2.83	22)
3) 2.17	8) 1.83	13) 1.67	18) 3.83	23)
4) 1.33	9) 2	14) 1.17	19) 3.17	24)
5) 1.83	10) 2.5	15) 3.5	20) 2.83	25)

Total = 45.32

2. Divide the total by the number of scores. 45.32 divided by 20 = 2.27.
   The average rating for the "youth's dissatisfaction" is 2.27.

What the score means:

For youth's dissatisfaction, the categories range from:
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)
1.5 to 2.49
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)
Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

The average score was 2.27—slightly below the middle of the scale.

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth's dissatisfaction was 1.61.

SAMPLE:

FINDING RANGES

(page 1 of 3)

*Find the **range of scores** for the mentor-youth relationships in your program. For each of the three qualities that is being measured – youth-centered relationships, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction – count the number of scores that fall into each category. Then divide that number by the total number of scores to calculate the percentage of relationships that falls into each category.*

Example: You administer the "Youth Survey" to 20 youth who are in mentoring relationships through your program. You then score each of the 20 surveys.

Range of scores for youth-centered relationship (YC)

1. List the "youth-centered relationship" scores from all the surveys.

YC SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 2.4	6) 3.2	11) 3.8	16) 3.2	21)
2) 4	7) 3	12) 3.4	17) 2.8	22)
3) 3	8) 3.6	13) 3.4	18) 1.6	23)
4) 4	9) 3.4	14) 4	19) 2	24)
5) 3.8	10) 3	15) 2.6	20) 2.8	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.
   4.0 (very youth-centered): 3 scores in this category
   3.0 to 3.99: 11 scores in this category
   1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered): 6 scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	Percent of scores in that category
4.0 (very youth-centered)	15% (3 divided by 20)
3.0 to 3.99	55% (11 divided by 20)
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)	30% (6 divided by 20)

You can compare your range of scores for youth-centered relationship with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

4.0 (very youth-centered)	50%
3.0 to 3.99	44%
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)	6%

SAMPLE:

FINDING RANGES

(page 2 of 3)

Range of scores for youth's emotional engagement (EE)

1. List the "youth's emotional engagement" scores from all the surveys.

EE SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 3.125	6) 3	11) 4	16) 3.25	21)
2) 3.5	7) 2.75	12) 3.375	17) 2.25	22)
3) 2.625	8) 3.5	13) 3.125	18) 1.125	23)
4) 3.875	9) 3.25	14) 3.5	19) 1.75	24)
5) 4	10) 2.5	15) 1.75	20) 3	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.

   4.0 (highly engaged): 2 scores in this category

   3.0 to 3.99: 11 scores in this category

   1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged) : 7 scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	Percent of scores in that category
4.0 (very engaged)	10% (2 divided by 20)
3.0 to 3.99	55% (11 divided by 20)
1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged)	35% (7 divided by 20)

You can compare your range of scores for youth's emotional engagement with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

4.0 (highly engaged)	28%
3.0 to 3.99	60%
1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged)	12%

SAMPLE

FINDING RANGES

(page 3 of 3)

Range of scores for youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

1. List the "youth dissatisfaction" scores from all the surveys.

YD SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1) 2	6) 2.33	11) 1.33	16) 2.5	21)
2) 1.5	7) 3.17	12) 1.83	17) 2.83	22)
3) 2.17	8) 1.83	13) 1.67	18) 3.83	23)
4) 1.33	9) 2	14) 1.17	19) 3.17	24)
5) 1.83	10) 2.5	15) 3.5	20) 2.83	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.

   1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied): 3 scores in this category

   1.5 to 2.49: 9 scores in this category

   2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied): 8 scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	Percent of scores in that category
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)	15% (3 divided by 20)
1.5 to 2.49	45% (9 divided by 20)
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)	40% (8 divided by 20)

Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

You can compare your range of scores for youth's dissatisfaction with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)	48%
1.5 to 2.49	44%
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)	8%

CONCLUSION:

MAKING USE OF YOUR SURVEY FINDINGS

You can use your survey findings in two important ways: to support and strengthen individual mentor-youth relationships, and to gain insight into how you can improve the overall effectiveness of your program. In addition, as you use the survey over time, changes in scores can help you measure the extent to which modifications in program practices are resulting in stronger mentor-youth relationships.

LOOKING AT INDIVIDUAL MENTOR-YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

The survey allows you to measure the quality of each mentor-youth relationship in your program and to see how the relationship is developing over time. Thus, it can help you identify relationships that need additional support if they are going to strengthen and endure.[3]

Example: You administer the survey to a 12-year-old boy who has been meeting with his mentor for three months. The scores on all three qualities—youth-centered relationship, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction—are all in the middle of the scale. Three months later, you administer the survey to the same youth to see how the relationship is developing over time. The scores for the first two qualities are about the same. However, you had expected them to improve because mentoring relationships typically strengthen during this period. In addition, the score for "youth's dissatisfaction" has increased on the scale.

What will you do with this information? Talk with the mentor and/or with the youth to identify problems that need to be addressed? Provide additional support and training that would be useful for the mentor?

STRENGTHENING PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE

Evaluations of mentoring programs have demonstrated that programs which have a strong infrastructure are more likely to create strong and long-lasting mentoring relationships (Sipe, 1996). Thus, if you find, after using this survey, that the average scores or range of scores indicate relatively weak mentor-youth relationships, you would want to examine and improve your program infrastructure. You could consider these questions:

[3] For a technical discussion of using a similar youth survey in this way, see Reddy, Roffman, Grossman, and Rhodes, 2001.

- Is there additional information—beyond the survey findings—that you need in order to better understand the cause(s) of the low scores? How would you collect that information?

- What changes will you consider making in your program as a result of your findings? For example, should you modify your approaches to screening, matching, or training mentors? Should you implement more effective procedures for monitoring and supporting matches? (See "Additional Resources," at the end of this material, for other Technical Assistance Packets that provide practical suggestions in some of these areas.)

- How will you know whether the changes you make in program practices work—whether they do, in fact, lead to stronger mentoring relationships?

Example: You administer the "Youth Survey" to 20 youth who are matched with mentors in your program. You score each survey and then calculate the average scores across all the surveys. The average scores are: 3.15 for "youth-centered relationship"; 2.96 for "youth's emotional engagement"; and 2.27 for "youth's dissatisfaction."

You are not satisfied with these findings. To follow up on them and learn more about the reasons for the relatively weak relationships, you hold separate focus groups with youth and with mentors. During the focus group with youth, it becomes clear that many of them feel their mentors do not give them much opportunity to suggest things that they (the youth) would like to do during their meetings together. They complain that they spend too much time doing homework together and not enough time doing "fun" activities. And when they try to tell this to their mentors, the mentors don't seem to hear them.

Similarly, during the focus group with mentors, you learn that they are spending a lot of time doing homework with the youth or trying to engage them in what the mentors consider to be "serious" and "supportive" discussions.

You realize that you have to immediately strengthen your approach to training mentors. You add a training workshop that focuses on the importance of doing "fun" activities with their mentees as a way of building their relationships and on giving youth a "voice" in deciding on those activities. You also provide some additional training on "active listening."

MEASURING PROGRAM PROGRESS

After you have made changes in your program infrastructure, you can administer the "Youth Survey" again a few months later to measure the extent to which those

changes have led to stronger mentor-youth relationships. The first time you give the survey to youth in your program, the average score or the range of scores for each of the three qualities serves as a benchmark against which you can gauge program improvement when you give the survey again.

Example: The first time you administer the survey, you get the average scores in the previous example, and after more investigation into the causes of the low scores, you make changes intended to strengthen your mentor training component.

These initial scores—3.15, 2.96, and 2.27 are your benchmark. Six months after implementing the changes in mentor training, you administer the "Youth Survey" again. You compare the scores with those from the first survey to learn whether, and the extent to which, changes in program practices have had positive results.

Or perhaps your program has decided to look at the range of scores rather than average scores. When you first administer the survey, the range of scores for "youth-centered relationship" was 15 percent in the highest category (very youth-centered); 55 percent in the middle category; and 30 percent in the lowest category (not youth-centered). That is your benchmark. Your range of scores for "youth's emotional engagement" and "youth's dissatisfaction" similarly provide the benchmark for each of these qualities.

As a result of what you learn from administering the survey, your program makes changes in its infrastructure—including mentor screening and training—in an effort to strengthen mentor-youth relationships. You also set a goal: you want no more than 10 percent of the surveys to score in the lowest category for any quality. Six months after you have implemented the changes in program practices, you administer the survey again to gauge progress toward meeting your goal.

COMPARING YOUR FINDINGS TO AN EXTERNAL BENCHMARK

In judging survey findings, the best comparison for a program is itself. Programs should look at changes in their findings over time in order to measure their progress. However, it can also be useful to use the survey findings from another program as a kind of external benchmark against which to compare your own performance.

As noted in the scoring guide, these survey questions were originally used in an evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) agencies, programs with strong infrastructures and proven outcomes. The scoring sheets for calculating averages and finding ranges include the BBBS scores for each quality that is being measured. You can use those scores as an external benchmark against which to gauge your own program's findings. If your scores are similar to the BBBS scores, it indicates that

your mentor-youth relationships are approximately as strong in those areas as the relationships in BBBS—relationships that had positive outcomes for youth.

POSITIVE FINDINGS? BE SURE TO USE THEM, TOO

Strong mentoring relationships lead to positive outcomes for youth. And when your survey findings indicate that your program is fostering strong relationships, make sure the community knows. You can use your positive findings to help you recruit mentors and promote the program to potential participants. And you can provide the data to funders to help them see that your program is making a difference in the lives of youth.

SCORING SHEETS

This section includes scoring sheets that you can copy and use. There are sheets for:

- Scoring individual surveys (3 pages)
- Calculating average scores across all the surveys (3 pages)
- Organizing the range of scores from all the surveys (3 pages)

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 1 of 3)

I. Youth-centered relationship (YC)

Youth who feel their mentor takes their preferences and interests into account are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel their mentor is less interested in them. This quality is measured through questions 2, 5, 8, 11, 15.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

YC QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
2	
5	
8	
11	
15	

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 5 to 20.)

   Total =

3. Divide the total by 5 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score =

What the score means:

For youth-centered relationship, the categories range from:
4.0 (very youth-centered)
3.0 to 3.99
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 2 of 3)

II. Youth's emotional engagement (EE)

These items measure the degree to which the youth enjoys the relationship and is emotionally engaged in it (for example, whether the youth feels happy, special, mad, or bored). Youth who feel better about being around their mentor are more likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth who feel less positive. This quality is measured through questions 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

EE QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
3	
6	
9	
12	
13	
16	
18	
19	

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 8 to 32.)

   Total =

3. Divide the total by 8 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score =

What the score means:

For youth's emotional engagement, the categories range from:
4.0 (highly engaged)
3.0 to 3.9
1.0 to 2.9 (not very engaged)

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING THE SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

(page 3 of 3)

III. Youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

Youth who feel more dissatisfied with their mentor and the relationship are less likely to show improvement in their behaviors and attitudes than are youth with more favorable impressions. Thus, mentoring programs that can create more satisfying relationships are more likely to be effective than are similar mentoring programs that create less satisfying relationships. This quality is measured through questions 1, 4, 7, 10, 14, 17.

1. List the score (the number circled) for each survey question that measures this quality.

YC QUESTION	*NUMBER THE YOUTH CIRCLED*
1	
4	
7	
10	
14	
17	

2. Add the "numbers circled." (The total will be from 6 to 24.)

   Total =

3. Divide the total by 6 (the number of items) to get a score. (The score will be from 1 to 4.)

   Score =

What the score means:

For youth's dissatisfaction, the categories range from:
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)
1.5 to 2.49
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)
Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 1 of 3)

Find the average scores for the mentor-youth relationships in your program. For each of the three qualities that is being measured – youth-centered relationships, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction – total the scores for that quality. Then divide the total by the number of scores you have added together.

Average score for youth-centered relationship (YC)

1. Total the "youth-centered relationship" scores from all the surveys.

YC SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

Total =

2. Divide the total by the number of scores.

   The average rating for youth-centered relationship is _____ .

What the score means:

For youth-centered relationship, the categories range from:
4.0 (very youth-centered)
3.0 to 3.99
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)

Where does your program's average fall within these categories?

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth-centered relationship in those programs was 3.69.

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 2 of 3)

Average score for youth's emotional engagement (EE)

1. Total the "youth's emotional engagement" scores from all the surveys.

EE SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

Total =

2. Divide the total by the number of scores.

   The average rating for youth's emotional engagement is _____.

What the score means:

For youth's emotional engagement, the categories range from:
4.0 (highly engaged)
3.0 to 3.9
1.0 to 2.9 (not very engaged)

Where does your program's average fall within these categories?

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth's emotional engagement was 3.55.

SCORING SHEET:

CALCULATING AVERAGES

(page 3 of 3)

Average score for youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

1. Total the "youth's dissatisfaction" scores from all the surveys.

YD SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

Total =

2. Divide the total by the number of scores.

   The average rating for youth's dissatisfaction is _____ .

What the score means:

For youth's dissatisfaction, the categories range from:
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)
1.5 to 2.49
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)
Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

Where does your program's average fall within these categories?

This survey was originally used with youth in BBBS programs, who had been meeting with their mentors for an average of 12.8 months. As a comparison, the average score for youth's dissatisfaction was 1.61.

SCORING SHEET:

FINDING RANGES

(page 1 of 3)

*Find the **range of scores** for the mentor-youth relationships in your program. For each of the three qualities that is being measured – youth-centered relationships, youth's emotional engagement, and youth's dissatisfaction – count the number of scores that fall into each category. Then divide that number by the total number of scores to calculate the percentage of relationships that falls into each category.*

Range of scores for youth-centered relationship (YC)

1. List the "youth-centered relationship" scores from all the surveys.

YC SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.
   4.0 (very youth-centered): _____ scores in this category
   3.0 to 3.99: _____ scores in this category
   1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered): _____ scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	**Percent of scores in that category**
4.0 (very youth-centered)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
3.0 to 3.99	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
1.0 to 2.99 (very youth-centered)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)

You can compare your range of scores for youth-centered relationship with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

4.0 (very youth-centered)	50%
3.0 to 3.99	44%
1.0 to 2.99 (not youth-centered)	6%

SCORING SHEET:

FINDING RANGES

(page 2 of 3)

Range of scores for youth's emotional engagement (EE)

1. List the "youth's emotional engagement" scores from all the surveys.

EE SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.

   4.0 (highly engaged): _____ scores in this category

   3.0 to 3.99: _____ scores in this category

   1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged) : _____ scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	**Percent of scores in that category**
4.0 (highly engaged)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
3.0 to 3.99	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)

You can compare your range of scores for youth's emotional engagement with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

4.0 (highly engaged)	28%
3.0 to 3.99	60%
1.0 to 2.99 (not very engaged)	12%

SCORING SHEET:

FINDING RANGES

(page 3 of 3)

Range of scores for youth's dissatisfaction (YD)

1. List the "youth dissatisfaction" scores from all the surveys.

YD SCORE ON INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1)	6)	11)	16)	21)
2)	7)	12)	17)	22)
3)	8)	13)	18)	23)
4)	9)	14)	19)	24)
5)	10)	15)	20)	25)

2. Find the number of scores that fall into each category.

   1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied): _____ scores in this category

   1.5 to 2.49: _____ scores in this category

   2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied): _____ scores in this category

3. Divide the number in each category by the total number of scores to find the percentage that falls into that category:

Category	**Percent of scores in that category**
1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
1.5 to 2.49	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)	_____ % (_____ divided by _____)

Lower scores are better. They mean the youth is less dissatisfied.

You can compare your range of scores for youth's dissatisfaction with those for youth in the BBBS programs, who had been matched an average of 12.8 months. Their range was:

1.0 to 1.49 (highly satisfied)	48%
1.5 to 2.49	44%
2.5 or higher (highly dissatisfied)	8%

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For practical information on strengthening program infrastructure, see these related JUMP Technical Assistance Packets, which were written by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). They are available through the National Mentoring Center at NWREL, 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204. Phone: 800-547-6339. Or they can be downloaded at **www.ppv.org** or **www.nwrel.org/mentoring**.

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring. Linda Jucovy. September 2000.

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors. Linda Jucovy. May 2001.

Supporting Mentors. Linda Jucovy. June 2001.

Training New Mentors. Linda Jucovy. March 2001.

For more information on the causes and effects of too-early ends of mentoring relationships, see "Going the Distance: Keeping Mentors and Mentees Together Over Time." *Research Corner*. National Mentoring Partnership Web site (**www.mentoring.org**), February 2002.

Notes:

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